DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 596 IR 008 450

TITLE Television and the Classroom: A Special Relationship. A Report on the CBS Television Reading Program. How It Works, How It Began, and How Teachers, Students, and Parents Feel about It.

INSTITUTION Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., New York, N.Y. Television Network.

PUB DATE 79

NOTE 21p.

AVAILABLE FROM CBS Television and Reading Program, 51 West 52nd Street, New York, NY 10019 for individual sample copies of teacher's guides, scripts, and other materials and information about the program.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Broadcast Television; Junior High School Students; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Materials; *Reading Programs; *Scripts; Secondary Education

IDENTIFIERS Television Reading Program

ABSTRACT

This description of the CBS Television Reading Program includes a report on the results of a survey investigating the reactions of students, teachers, and parents to the program. Personal interviews were conducted in 97 schools selected from inner-city, urban fringe, and suburban locations in 11 metropolitan areas; subjects included 262 teachers, 921 students in three grade categories ranging from 7-12, and 95 parents. Responses from all three groups were favorable to the program, in which students read matched-to-broadcast scripts of specially selected CBS presentations in the classroom and refer to the scripts at home while watching the programs, often with their families. Their teachers use comprehensive Reading Enrichment Guides prepared by CBS educational consultants to stimulate class discussion and creative activities based on the script. The major benefit reported by teachers was that the program provided worthwhile reading materials that the students' interest in television motivated them to read. A majority of the students found the material more interesting than their usual reading assignments, and 98 percent wanted to participate again. Parents generally felt that using the scripts was beneficial to their child, and 96 percent wanted to continue the program. (RAO)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED188596

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Television and the classroom: A special relationship

A report on the CBS Television Reading Program. How it works, how it began, and how teachers, students and parents feel about it.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jack Blessington

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IR008430

Since March 1977, more than 5,000,000 elementary and secondary school students in cities across the country have participated in a project that uses their interest in—and enthusiasm for—television to help improve their reading skills and their motivation for further reading, learning and creative thinking. That project is the CBS Television Reading Program.

Working with television as a learning tool, students read matched-to-broadcast scripts of specially selected CBS presentations in the classroom, and refer to the scripts at home, often while watching the programs with their families. Their teachers use comprehensive Reading Enrichment Guides, prepared by CBS educational consultants, to stimulate class discussion and creative activities based on the scripts and the program content.

More than an effort to promote reading, the project is an active, thought-provoking process that provides the opportunity for students to explore and discuss a range of subjects, concepts and ideas.

As the Reading Program grew in size, scope and acceptance, we initiated a research study to measure its effectiveness and appeal with teachers, students and parents.

The results indicated that the great majority of those surveyed in all three groups were enthusiastic about their participation in the project and were interested in future use.

The study showed that, by providing interesting and exciting materials to work with, the Reading Program encourages students to exercise and develop their reading and learning skills. It creates a stimulating classroom atmosphere that increases student motivation to learn and think.

The study not only demonstrated how the CBS Television Reading Program is achieving its goals, but it confirmed our original belief when we established the project: Television, used in conjunction rather than in competition with the classroom, offers a special relationship for reading, thinking and learning.

JAMES H. ROSENFIELD
President
CBS Television Network

Relating classroom work to the rest of life may be one of the most difficult challenges a teacher has to face. If the students tune out because they can't see what it all has to do with them, then discussion of World War II tends to get a little mixed up with all the other wars in their minds; finding Wales on the map seems an impossible task; and the comparison of freedom in this country with other nations remains abstract.

Find the right relationship, however, and unlimited excitement and motivation are generated. Real thinking and learning can take place. Teachers, students and parents alike know that something special has happened.

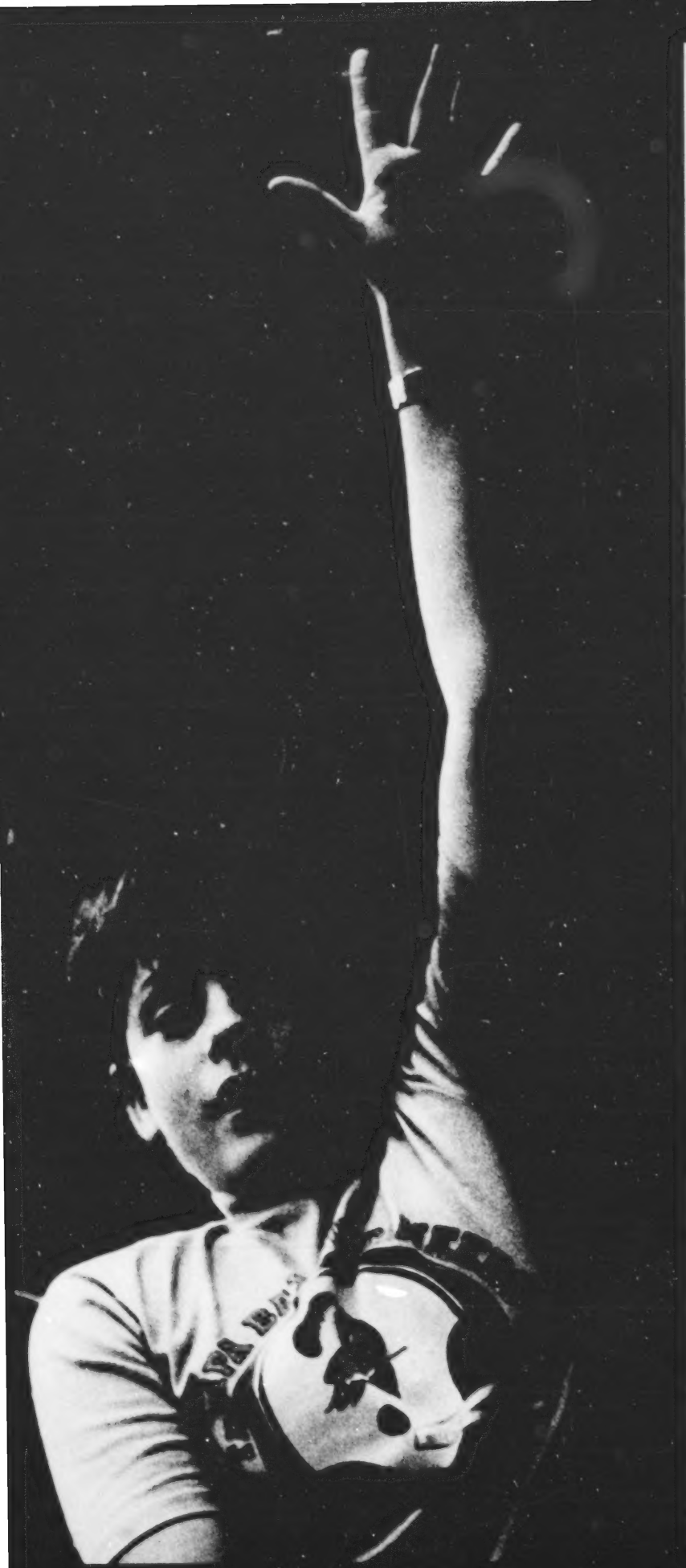
For the 623,765 students who read and discussed the script for "The Corn Is Green" and then watched it on television, Wales will never again be an unknown place on a map and their own opportunity for education probably won't be entirely taken for granted. "The Corn Is Green" is the story of a boy who works in the coal mines in Wales and is given an education and the chance for a new life by a determined English woman who brings schooling to the miners.

For the 1,350,000 students who read the scripts as they watched "The Defection of Simas Kudirka," the concept of freedom is no longer abstract. It is the true story of a Lithuanian seaman who made a courageous leap to freedom from his Russian ship to a U.S. Coast Guard vessel, only to be returned to the Russians within hours.

For the 650,000 students who read their scripts along with the actors on *The Waltons* in their special program "Day of Infamy," Pearl Harbor is a real place and the beginnings of World War II for America are understandable.

For all of these students, plus the others who participated in the CBS Television Reading Program, the written word and the spoken word have new and special relationships.

When students are provided with the written words of television, using the script as a starting point, reading becomes an essential part of the learning experience, and the study of related matter—like history and other



WGAN newsman Ron Hammonds, left, and cameraman record the action

Waltons teach today's history

The Reading Program can lead teachers and students to take a fresh look at a chapter of history. The "Day of Infamy" episode of *The Waltons*—for example—generated interest in learning about World War II.

social studies–naturally follows.

How it works

The CBS Television Reading Program is a unique, cooperative project reflecting the combined efforts of the Network and participating affiliated stations, school systems and, in many cases, local newspapers and corporate sponsors.

Students in the Program are given complete matched-to-broadcast scripts–including all stage and camera directions–of selected television dramas to be offered by the CBS Television Network. They read and discuss the script in class before the broadcast, and can follow along with the script while watching the broadcast at home, often with their families.

The scripts are reprinted in newspaper tabloid form and distributed by schools directly to the students. In many cities, the scripts also appear as a special supplement in a local newspaper for general circulation, allowing parents to share in their children's learning experience by reading and watching with them.

Teachers receive extensive Reading Enrichment Guides for each broadcast prepared by educators working with CBS. These Guides include information on how to work with scripts and television in the classroom, questions to prompt discussion and comprehension of the themes of each broadcast, and suggestions for further reading, writing and creative activities that can grow out of the reading/viewing experience.

The Network provides the participating CBS affiliated stations with the selection of programs available in the project, as well as a copy of the matched-to-broadcast script and the Teacher's Guide for each Reading Program presentation they choose.

The local station then organizes the project in the community, working in conjunction with local schools, the newspaper (when involved) and a local corporate sponsor who covers the cost of reprinting the scripts.

The start of a good idea

Using television as a tool to encourage young people to read was an idea that developed in the

Philadelphia school system in 1970, initially limited to mimeographed scripts of old series viewed on cassettes in class.

The limitations of video playback hardware, the inability to use timely television programs, the absence of advance preparation and the cost of reproducing scripts caused educators to turn to the networks.

How CBS got involved

When CBS learned about the Philadelphia project, the Network recognized the tremendous educational opportunity inherent in the concept and felt it was well worth exporting to other cities around the country.

In the fall of 1976, CBS brought together educators and broadcasters from several major cities to discuss using television as a learning tool. That successful meeting recommended a test of the project.

In March 1977, a pilot reading program was set up at the CBS Owned television stations in St. Louis and Los Angeles, and at CBS Boston affiliate WNAC-TV. The broadcast involved was "A

Students learn how to visualize—to think in pictures—while reading and studying the special format of a television script.

In many cities, newspapers participate in the Reading Program by printing scripts—part of the local collaboration which *Editor and Publisher* called "an unusual nationwide community venture."

Circle of Children," a dramatization based on a book about a housewife's work at a school for emotionally disturbed children.

In each city, the scripts were printed by a newspaper for distribution to the schools. Local corporate underwriting took care of the printing costs in St. Louis and Los Angeles. The *Boston Herald-American* itself printed 15,000 special supplements of the scripts for use in the schools. More than 170,000 students participated in the three cities.

In Philadelphia, where WCAU-TV used another program, "The Deadliest Season," which dealt with hockey violence, 200,000 students participated and 900,000 scripts were printed and distributed by *The Sunday Bulletin*—with corporate underwriting.

The experimental collaboration of television stations, educators, newspapers and corporations proved successful and beneficial enough to establish the pattern that has been followed ever since.

As a result, in June 1977, the Network established the CBS Television Reading Program Office to coordinate the project.

That July, more than 100 educators and broadcasters from 22 cities attended a day-long seminar held at the CBS Broadcast Center in New York. They came to learn about the Television Reading Program, how it worked and how it could be established in their communities.

Since then, the project has been developed and extended to cities across the country where it has grown in size and acceptance.

Does it work?

To find out just how well the Program was working—how teachers, students and parents evaluated it and how they perceived its effect—CBS initiated a research project.

Conducting the study

Some 262 teachers, 921 students and 95 parents in 11 metropolitan areas were surveyed on their experiences with the Reading Program for the CBS Television presentation of "The Corn Is Green" (broadcast in January 1979).

Personal interviews were conducted in 97 schools selected from inner-city, urban fringe and

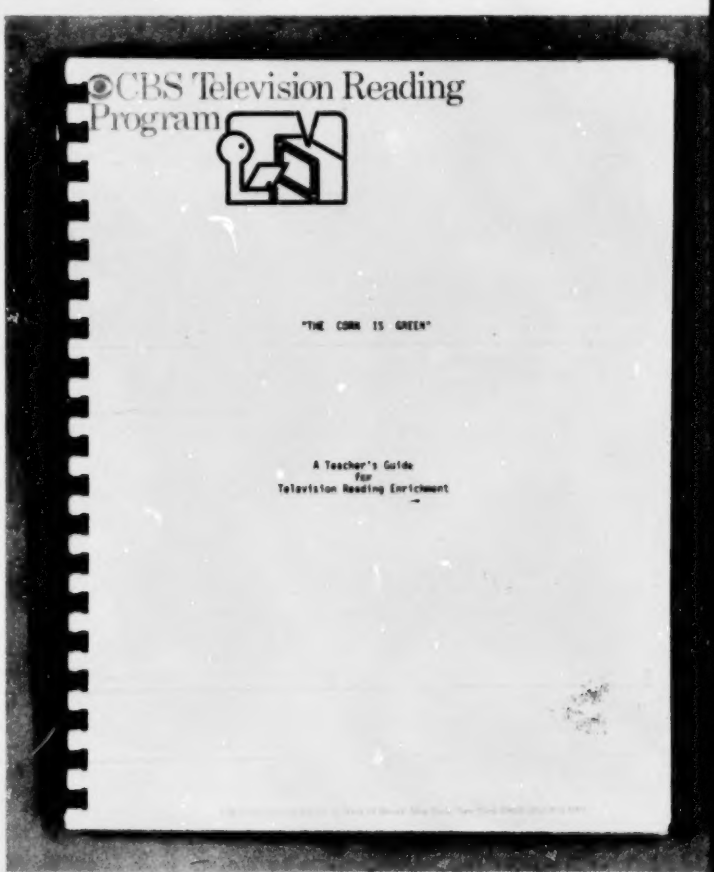
suburban locations in Cleveland, Ohio; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Tampa, Florida; Seattle, Washington; Minneapolis, Minnesota; LaCrosse, Wisconsin; Charleston, South Carolina; Greensboro, North Carolina; Lincoln, Nebraska; Portland, Maine; and Boston, Massachusetts.

Roughly equal numbers of students in three grade categories were included: seventh and eighth grades, ninth and tenth, and eleventh and twelfth. The teachers selected used the Program with these grade categories.

The parent response was obtained by sending questionnaires home to a sample of parents who were reported by their children to have watched the program with them.

All teachers and students who took part in this study were selected by the participating schools, which were asked to include students of varying reading and scholastic ability and teachers of classes of different reading levels. Additionally, thirteen group discussions were conducted with teachers, students and parents who had participated in the CBS Television Reading Program.

The study was a joint effort of Child Research Service, Inc. of New York City and the Office of Social Research, CBS Inc. Project directors were Barbara Lee (CBS) and June Esserman (CRS). A copy of the complete report is available upon request to the Office of Social Research, CBS Inc., 51 West 52 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.



Besides story, theme and character information, the Guide provides vocabulary drills, reading lists and suggestions for other enrichment activities and projects.

The CBS Television Reading Program encourages students to develop and exercise their reading skills by providing interesting and exciting materials with which to work.

It encourages students to learn and think by creating a classroom atmosphere that is more stimulating than usual.

The Program promotes greater than usual student participation and effort, and enhances the expression of ideas and critical thinking in class discussions and other associated activities.

The use of television scripts probably increases students' interest and pleasure in reading in general.

The Reading Program appears to be adaptable to a wide range of schools and grades.

The great majority of teachers, students and parents who participated were enthusiastic about the CBS Television Reading Program and were interested in future use.

What the teachers say

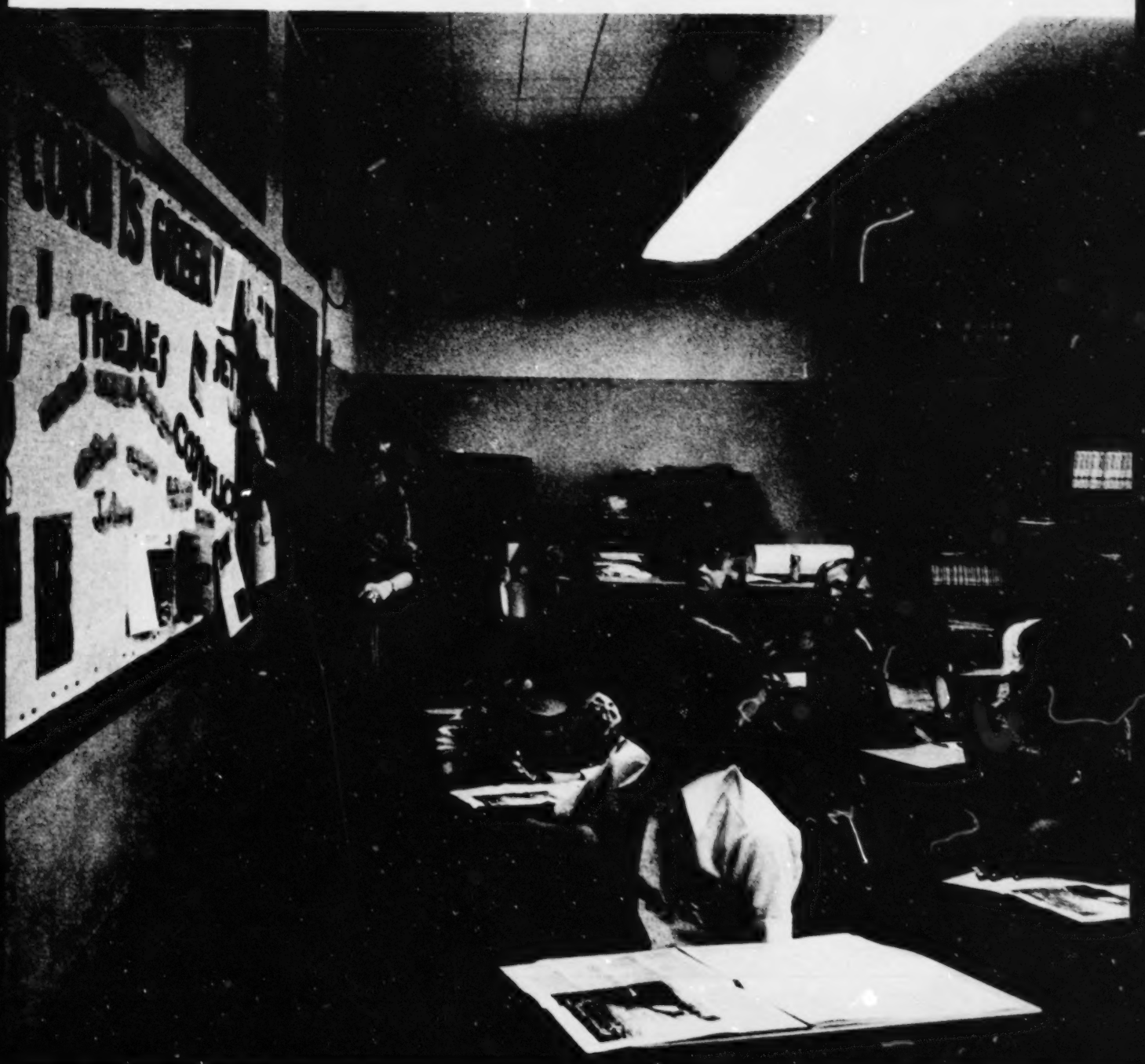
The major benefit from the teachers' viewpoint is that the Program provides worthwhile reading materials that utilize students' interest in television as a motivating factor. 86 percent of the teachers reported that their students were interested in reading the script.

> *"Being in script form and my kids knowing they were part of something that other schools were doing made them feel important—that they were doing this and it was actually going to be on TV."*

The use of television scripts in the Reading Program probably increased student enjoyment of, and interest in, reading in general, according to almost nine out of ten of the teachers interviewed.

> *"I had students who I ordinarily really have trouble getting to do anything, and they did the report, and a couple said, 'I can't get it finished by Friday because it's not good enough,' and 'Let me take it home and recopy it'—and these are students who rarely do anything."*

Teachers found other benefits in the Reading Program. The



Comprehension is an important part of the reading and viewing activity. Here a class discussion about the themes of "The Corn Is Green" centers on the conflicts of values and viewpoints.

contents of the scripts, many said, included ideas worthy of study; the Program created a connection between the written and spoken word for the students; and it lent itself to multiple teaching purposes ranging from vocabulary enrichment to the development of cultural and historical awareness.

In describing the students' response to pre-program classroom activities with the script—like reading it aloud and discussing the material—two-thirds of the teachers reported a greater level of enthusiasm than usual. More than half the teachers reported greater than usual participation and effort when the students used the scripts.

"They became hams for acting. When the bell sounded for the next period, the kids didn't even hear it. So I got permission from the supervisor to continue with them. When it was time to go they were all saying, 'Who's going to read tomorrow?'"

Noting motivation on the part of their students, after the

Teachers found the Reading Program could be adapted to a variety of grade and reading levels.

program was aired, to discuss what they had seen and to engage in outside activities in connection with the broadcast, 86 percent of the teachers rated the expression of ideas and critical thinking in discussions and other post-program activities positively.

"I had my kids write about what their impression of what the character was going to be, reading about it, and how it changed after seeing the program. We got into how they perceived and how someone else perceives the same thing."

Many teachers used ideas suggested in the Teacher's Guide, to which they gave high marks. Nine out of ten teachers who received the Guide made use of it, and 83 percent rated it as "excellent" or "very good."

What the students say

Students in all types of schools and grades responded favorably to the Reading Program, with younger students and minority students expressing greater enthusiasm for future use.

The television script was more interesting than other material they usually read in class, according to 79 percent of the students. Furthermore, knowing that the television script was for a program that was going on the air made it more exciting reading, said 80 percent of the students interviewed.

Student interest in the script encouraged them to read carefully and not skip parts, which they say they sometimes do with other reading materials. Six out of ten students reported that they read the script more carefully than other classroom material.

Many students said they gained greater understanding of the program content and character motivation by reading the script before the broadcast than they ordinarily had in watching television.

"If you don't understand something, you can't press a button on the TV so it will go back, but you can with the script, and after you see that show, and read it back, you know how the person felt during a certain scene."

"By reading the script, you would know the feeling of the character when you watched it on TV, which you might not have noticed just by watching the show."

Best of all, education became enjoyable. Most of the students (78 percent) rated the entire experience of reading and discussing the script in the classroom before seeing the broadcast more enjoyable than their usual classroom work.

More than half the students (54 percent) reported that in reading or talking about the script, class participation was more active than usual—they more often raised their hands, answered questions or wanted to read aloud.

The majority of the students reported that they watched the program with someone, most often with a parent (67 percent).

What the parents say

Parent participation is an important element of the Reading Program's design. Benefits to the parent/child relationship from this experience—which included

promoting closeness, providing an opportunity to share their child's school work, stimulating discussion about the program and characters and encouragement to watch television with their children--were cited by 85 percent of the parents (based on a small sample of parents who were involved enough to watch with their children and complete and return a questionnaire).

"I enjoyed watching the play with my daughter and seeing her really 'get into it' by quoting entire sections of the play. I think she appreciated my being interested in her work and being able to actually take part in it."

Using television scripts increases children's interest in reading, in the opinion of 80 percent of the parents in the sample.

"My son was really excited.... He's been a poor reader and this really helped him a lot. He really sat and read over [the script]. It got to the point where I wanted him to be quiet. He was reading all the parts."

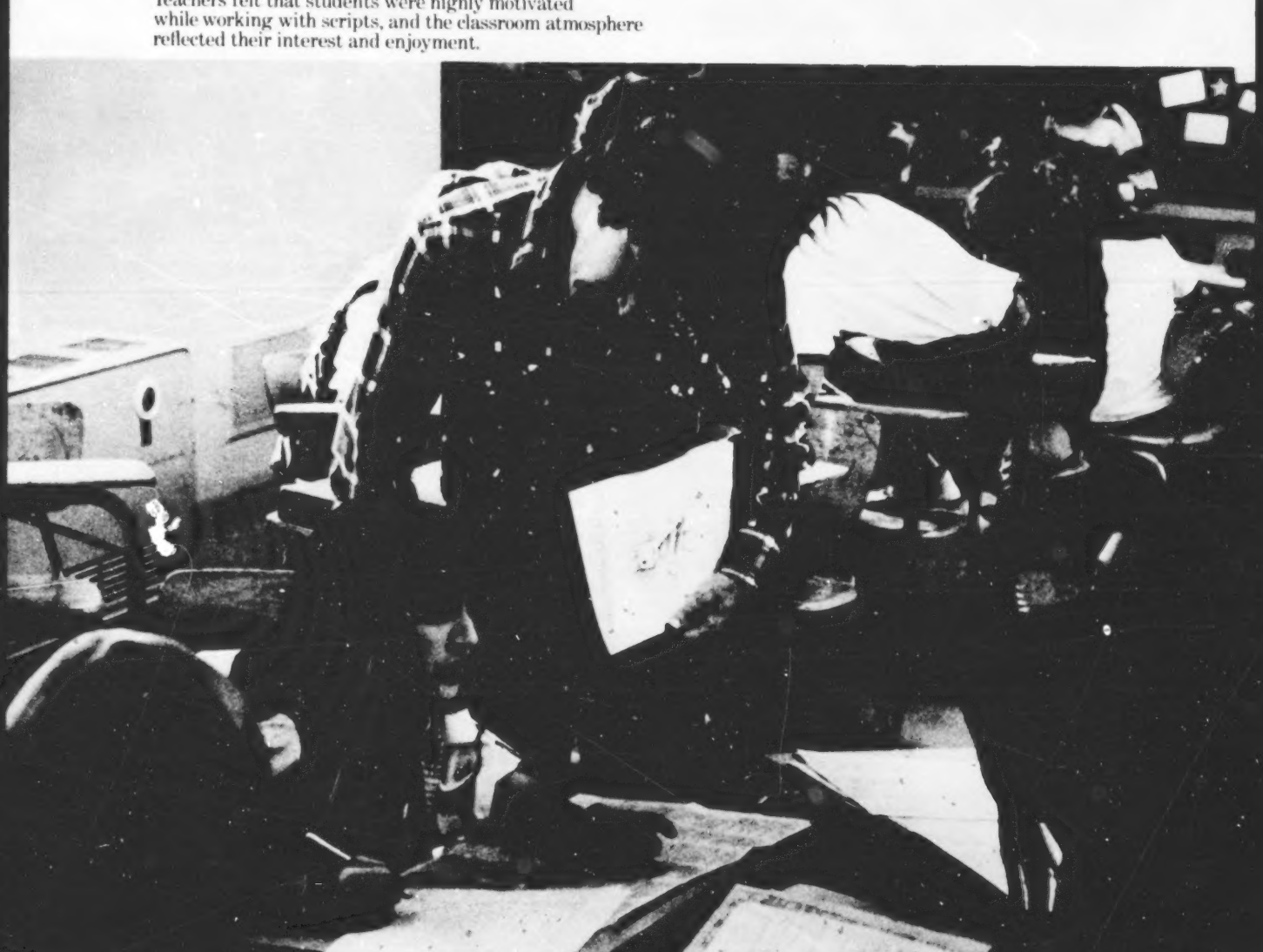
An even larger majority of these parents–85 percent–felt that the experience had educational value for their child. They said it promoted thinking, helped the child in relating the printed and spoken word and aided the child in understanding program content. Parents also felt this type of experience might help to upgrade their child's television tastes.

A special glamour

There was a special glamour and excitement about using the real scripts and the study found that students and teachers alike felt that the scripts worked best when they were used to their fullest potential–when students had a chance to "act out" the scripts (to read them aloud in class); when there was some use of the broadcast instructions provided; and when students were given the opportunity to discuss what they had seen and to compare the script with the broadcast.

Students who studied or talked about the television terms that were part of the script were more likely to be among those who

Teachers felt that students were highly motivated while working with scripts, and the classroom atmosphere reflected their interest and enjoyment.



were more enthusiastic about the project. For them it enhanced the feeling of working with special material.

> *"They were responsive to...the camera directions. They are video nuts anyway, and they really know this stuff, whether they can name it or not." (A teacher)*

The teachers who were most enthusiastic about the Program tended to focus on the concept of using television scripts as an educational tool, rather than on the content of the specific script.

Different disciplines can be used to explore various aspects of the subject matter. Here music contributes to an understanding of Welsh life and customs.

Junior High Youths Get Taste Of Wales With Songs And 'Corn Is Green' Script

For the future:

Teachers, students and parents all wanted to continue participation in the Reading Program, the study found.

All the teachers were interested in using the Program again in the future. Further, six out of ten teachers wanted to use scripts three or more times a year.

Virtually all students—98 percent—wanted to participate again. As with the teachers, they wanted to study television scripts several times a year but they tended to suggest an even greater frequency of use than did the teachers. Eight out of ten wanted to use them three or more times a year and at the extreme end, one out of five suggested they be used nine or more times a year.

Of the parents who viewed the program with their child, 96 percent would like their child to work with another script.

Individual sample copies of Teacher's Guides, scripts, and other materials and information about the Program may be obtained by writing:

CBS Television Reading Program
51 West 52 Street
New York, New York 10019

CBS TELEVISION READING PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

"A Circle of Children" March 1977

A story about a Connecticut housewife's volunteer work at a school for emotionally disturbed children. Jane Alexander starred in this adaptation of Mary MacCracken's autobiographical account.

"The Deadliest Season" March 1977

A dramatic special dealing with a professional hockey player, played by Michael Moriarty, whose personality and principles are brutalized by his hunger for success at any cost.

"The Children's Carol" December 1977

A special two-hour Christmas presentation of *The Waltons* in which two English children who have been orphaned by the London blitz, during World War II, leave their country and seek refuge on Walton's Mountain.

"Tell Me My Name" December 1977

The sensitive study of a mother who is forced to face the truth about her life when her adopted teenage daughter searches for the truth about her own origins.

"The Defection of Simas Kudirka" January 1978

The true story of a Lithuanian seaman who made a daring, but abortive, attempt for freedom by leaping from a Russian ship to the deck of a U.S. Coast Guard vessel, off the coast of Massachusetts. Alan Arkin starred in this acclaimed, award-winning presentation.

"The Secret Life of John Chapman" April 1978

A dramatic special about a college president who discovers that taking a risk, temporarily changing his job status, leads to a more compassionate understanding of people and the work they do. Ralph Waite played John Chapman.

"Home to Stay" May 1978

A young girl's attempt to keep her grandfather—played by Henry Fonda—out of a nursing home.

"One in a Million: The Ron LeFlore Story" October 1978

A true story depicting the incredible rise of baseball player Ron LeFlore—from prison inmate to star centerfielder for the Detroit Tigers. LeVar Burton played Ron LeFlore.

"Day of Infamy" December 1978

A special episode of *The Waltons*, this drama is a story of family love and support in the face of the Pearl Harbor crisis.

"Lovey: A Circle of Children, Part II" December 1978

A continuation of the portrayal of the trials and triumphs of Mary MacCracken, a woman dedicated to teaching emotionally disturbed children. Jane Alexander repeated her role.

"The Corn Is Green" January 1979

The story of a determined English lady, played by Katharine Hepburn, who brings schooling to young Welsh miners at the turn of the century. Based on Emlyn Williams' play.

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" April 1979

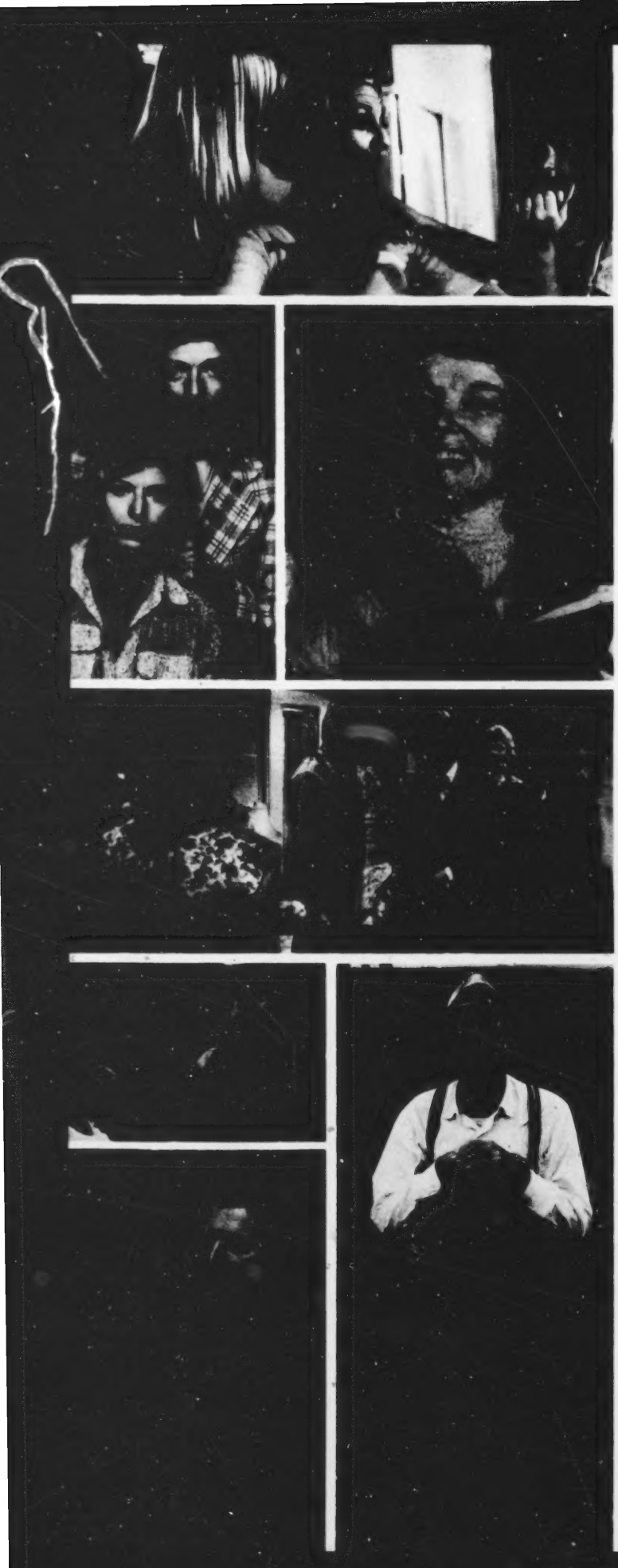
An animated adaptation of the C.S. Lewis classic depicting the excursion of four children into the exciting mythical land of Narnia.

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" April 1979

A compelling drama based on Maya Angelou's autobiography depicting a bright, sensitive black girl growing up in the South during the depression years.

"30 Minutes" April 1979

A CBS News magazine that reports weekly on stories of interest and importance to young people, this episode reported on the subjects of teenage runaways and high school driver education training.



Fall 1979 Presentations include:

"All Quiet on the Western Front"

An adaptation of the classic Erich Maria Remarque novel showing World War I through the eyes of a sensitive young German soldier. Richard Thomas and Ernest Borgnine star.

"Mayflower: The Pilgrims' Adventure"

The story of the men, women and children aboard the Mayflower on the 66-day trip to a new country and a new life.

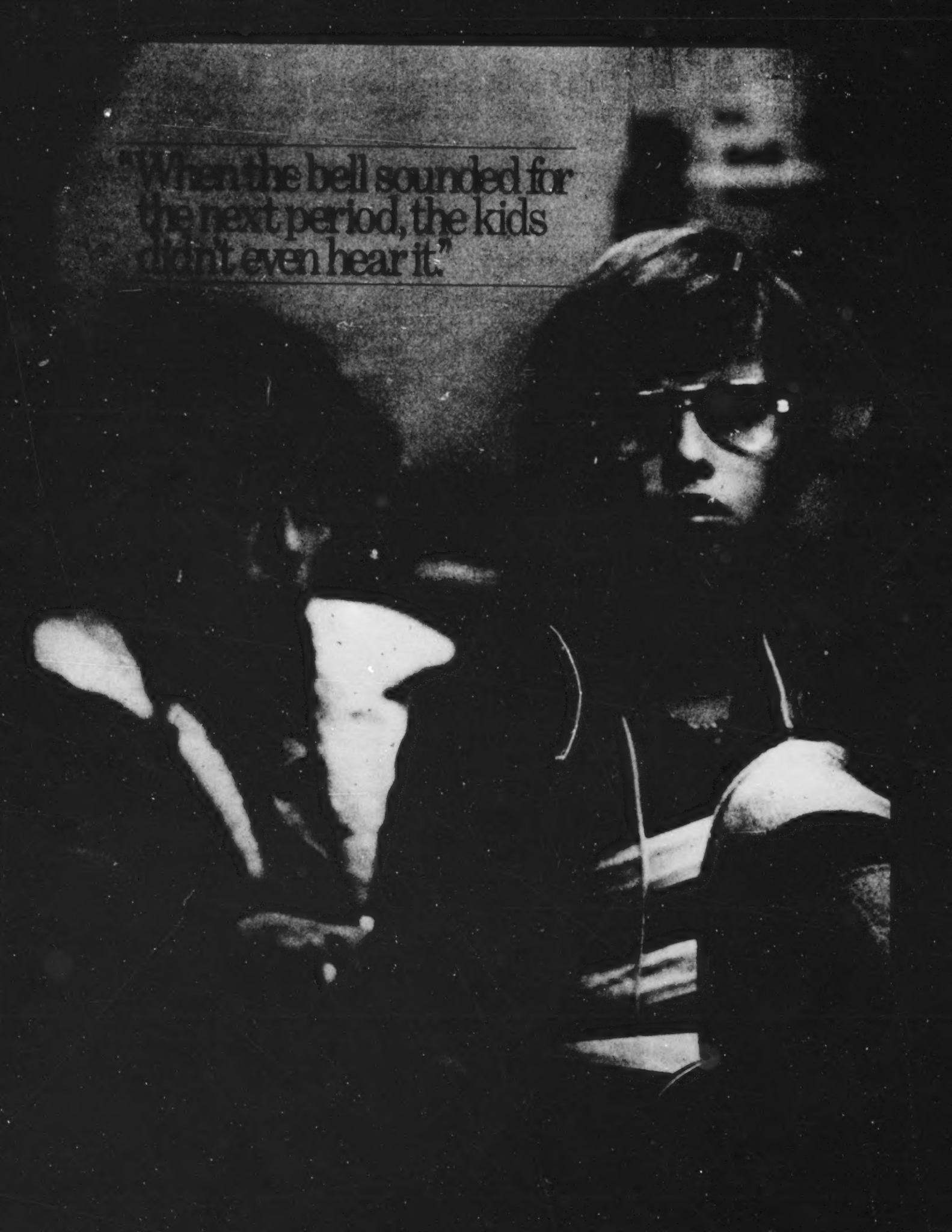
"Aunt Mary"

Jean Stapleton plays the remarkable Mary Dobkin, a physically handicapped woman who forms and coaches a baseball team of young neighborhood toughs.

"The Boy Who Drank Too Much"

An unusual story of friendship between two teenage boys—one of whom is an alcoholic. A perceptive study of teenage alcoholism and adolescent friendship.

Top to bottom, left to right: Jane Alexander in "A Circle of Children"; *30 Minutes* co-hosts Betsy Aaron and Christopher Glenn; Katharine Hepburn in "The Corn Is Green"; *The Waltons*; Diahann Carroll in "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"; Henry Fonda in "Home to Stay"; Alan Arkin in "The Defection of Simas Kudirka."


"When the bell sounded for
the next period, the kids
didn't even hear it."